

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 2301

STADIS////////

LIMDIS

FOR BENNET FROM AMBASSADOR JORDEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PN, PEPR
SUBJECT: DECONCINI RESERVATION

1. SENATOR DECONCINI CALLED ONE OF MY MISSION OFFICERS LAST NIGHT (PAUL SAENZ OF AID WHO WAS CONTROL OFFICER FOR DECONCINI'S VISIT TO PANAMA). THE SENATOR WANTED A "PERSONAL OPINION" ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS. SAENZ PROPERLY NOTED THAT THE TWO WERE TALKING ON AN OPEN PHONE LINE. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE WAS SURE OTHER PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON COULD MORE AUTHORITATIVELY ANSWER THE QUESTIONS. BUT THE SENATOR INDICATED HE WANTED TO KNOW HOW THINGS LOOKED AT THIS END OF THE LINE. IF YOU CONSIDER IT USEFUL AND APPROPRIATE YOU MAY WISH TO PASS ALONG THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO THE SENATOR FROM ME.

2. QUOTE DEAR SENATOR DECONCINI:

REQUOTE OUR MUTUAL FRIEND PAUL SAENZ REPORTED TO ME HIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU LAST EVENING. HE NOTED YOUR INTEREST IN SEVERAL MATTERS AS SEEN FROM THIS END OF THE LINE. HE VERY
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PROPERLY SAID--OR AT LEAST IMPLIED--THAT SOME OF THESE MATTERS WERE OF SOME SENSITIVITY INTERNALLY AND THAT YOU WERE TALKING ON AN OPEN PHONE LINE. YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, FROM YOUR MILITARY BACKGROUND THE STRICTURES AGAINST DISCUSSING CLASSIFIED MATTERS ON THE PHONE. INCIDENTIALLY, YOU REALIZE THAT PAUL IS AN AID OFFICER AND THUS NOT ABLE TO REQUIRED TO FOLLOW THE CURRENTS OF LOCAL POLITICS AND OPINION NEARLY AS CLOSELY AS OTHER OFFICERS

IN THIS MISSION.

REQUOTE IN ANY CASE, GIVEN YOUR INTEREST IN THE QUESTIONS RAISED AS REPORTED BY PAUL, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IF I SHARED WITH YOU MY OWN ESTIMATE OF THESE MATTERS. ID DO SO AS A FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR FROM THE SOUTHWEST, NOT ON AN OFFICIAL PLANE.

REQUOTE YOU ASKED ABOUT THE DEBATE AND THE IMPACT HERE. THE DISCUSSION IN THE SENATE IS BEING CARRIED LIVE IN SPANISH ON THE LOCAL RADIO STATIONS. NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER HAPPENED IN PANAMA BEFORE--A LIVE BROADCAST FROM A FOREIGN PARLIAMENTARY BODY. AND AT THE OUTSET, IT HAD A TREMENDOUS IMPACT AND HUGE LISTENERSHIP. PEOPLE FELT THEY WERE TUNED IN ON A CHAPTER OF HISTORY. THEY WERE ALSO GETTING A LIBERAL EDUCATION IN DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES.

REQUOTE BUT WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THE COIN BECAME MORE APPARENT. DAY AFTER DAY, THE PANAMANIAN HEARD THEIR COUNTRY Demeaned and vilified, their capabilities and intelligence questioned, the head of their government slandered. Even those Panamanians outside the government and opposed to it, for a variety of reasons, found this process insulting and offensive--as I suppose people in any country would. God knows we Americans would. The effect of this drop-by-drop poisoning of the well of goodwill--the new spirit which, CONFIDENTIAL

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AFTER ALL, HAD BEEN AN IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE OF THE WHOLE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A NEW TREATY AND A NEW RELATIONSHIP--WAS THAT THE FINAL APPROVAL BY THE SENATE OF THE NEUTRALITY TREATY WAS RECEIVED HERE WITH QUIET RESTRAINT. NORMALLY, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A DAY OF REJOICING AND CELEBRATION, A DAY ON WHICH FRIENDLINESS FOR OUR COUNTRY WOULD HAVE OVERFLOWED AND THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN DANCING IN THE STREETS. BUT ID DID NOT TURN OUT THAT WAY. TOO BAD.

REQUOTE YOU ASKED HOW THE DECONCINI RESERVATION TO THE NEUTRALITY TREATY HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY PANAMANIAN MEMBERS OF THIS EMBASSY AND I MYSELF HAVE SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS TALKING WITH PANAMANIAN FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE. WE HAVE TALKED WITH MEN AND WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT AND OUTSIDE; A BROAD REPRESENTATION OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY; PROFESSIONAL MEN--LAWYERS, DOCTORS, ENGINEERS, ETC.; AND JUST PLAIN FOLKS -- CLERKS, DRIVERS, ETC.. YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOUR RESERVATION HAS BEEN PRINTED IN FULL IN THE PRESS, AND YOUR STATEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH IT HAVE BEEN FEATURED ON NEWS REPORTS AND TELEVISION COMMENTARIES. I MUST REPORT TO YOU THAT WE HAVE NOT FOUND ONE PANAMANIAN WHO FEELS HIS COUNTRY COULD POSSIBLY ACCEPT THE RESERVATION WHICH THEY SEE AS A CLEAR

DENIGRATION OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY. ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THEY HAVE TOLD US THAT NO SELF-RESPECTING NATION IN THE WORLD COULD POSSIBLY GIVE TO ANOTHER NATION SUCH A CLEAR RIGHT TO INTERVENE IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE.

REQUOTE LAST NIGHT, MY WIFE AND I WENT TO DINNER AND ONE OF THE GUESTS WAS A FORMER MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE TOOK ME ASIDE AFTER DINNER TO DISCUSS THE PRESENT SITUATION. HE CALLED MY ATTENTION TO THE 1933 CONVENTION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND OTHER AMERICAN REPUBLICS. HE NOTED THAT THAT TREATY WAS THE EMOIDIMENT OF THE "GOOD NEIGHBOR" POLICY. IT WAS WELCOMED BY ALL OF LATIN AMERICA. HE WONDERED HOW WE COULD SO SHARPLY TURN OUR BACKS ON WHAT HAD BEEN SEEN FOR FOR FORTY-FIVE YEARS AS THE HEART OF RELATIONS IN THIS HEMISPHERE. CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS MORNING, I LOOKED UP THE TREATY AND I SAW IMMEDIATELY TO WHAT HE REFERRED. THE TREATY SAYS: "THE TERRITORY OF A STATE IS INVIOABLE AND MAY NOT BE THE OBJECT OF MILITARY OCCUPATION NOR OF OTHER MEASURES OF FORCE IMPOSED BY ANOTHER STATE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY OR FOR ANY MOTIVE WHATEVER, EVEN TEMPORARILY."

REQUOTE OUR EVIDENCE IS THAT THE VIEW EXPRESSED BY THIS FORMER MINISTER IS SHARED BY NINELTY-NINE PER CENT OF HIS FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA ITSELF HAS SHOWN AMAZING RESTRAINT IN DEALING WITH THE NEUTRALITY TREATY AND THE RESERVATIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS ATTACHED THERETO. IT HAS MADE A DELIBERATE DECISION TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CANAL TRATY ITSELF, AND WHAT RESERVATIONS MAY BE ATTACHED THERETO. ONLY THE, THEY HAVE SAID, WILL THE GOVERNMENTMAKE A FORMAL STATEMENT REGARDING ITS VIEWS ON THE FINAL DOCUMENTS. I PERSONALLY THINK THEY ARE ALSO WAITING TO SEE WHETHER THE SENATE MAY BE ABLE TO FIND A WAY TO MODIFY THE RESERVATION OR LIMIT ITS EFFECT IN SOME FASHION THAT MIGHT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR PANAMA TO AGREE TO IT WITHOUT SUFFERING AN UNACCEPTABLE BLOW TO THEIR NATIONAL PRIDE.

REUOTE I HOPE THIS BRIEF SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE PREVAILING ATTITUDES WILL BE HELPFUL TO YOU, DENNIS. I HOPE, TOO, THAT THE SENATE IN ITS WISDOM WILL MOVE FORWARD AND APPROVE THE CANAL TREATY ITSELF. THE HISTORIC IMPLICATIONS ARE CLEAR. WE WILL THEN HAVE MOVED A GIANT STEP FORWARD IN THE DIRECTION OF CREATING A QUITE NEW PICTURE OF OUR COUNTRY IN THIS PART OF WORLD-- AND A BRIGHT NEW PAGE IN THE HISTORY OF U.S-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS.

REQUOTE IF WE FAIL IN THIS GREAT ENDEAVOR, WE ARE IN FOR A BAD TIME, NOT JUST IN PANAMA BUT IN THIS ENTIRE PORTION OF OUR NEAREST NEIGHBORHOOD. I CAN THINK OF NO GREATER CONFIDENTIAL

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GIFT WE COULD GIVE TO FIDEL CASTRO, HIS MASTERS AND HIS
UNDERLINGS.

REQUOTE IF I CAN BE OF ANY HELP TO YOU AT ANY TIME, PLEASE
CALL ON ME. I SEND MY WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS.

SINCERELY,
/S/ BILL
WILLIAM J. JORDEN
AMBASSADOR

END TEXT.
JORDEN

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